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things that intoxicate. In adaptability to the mental measure of the Africans, Mohammedanism is, no doubt, first, while its ritual and its power to interest and divert are also superior to anything which Christianity has to offer. But this is not saying that, in an absolute sense, the doctrine of Mohammed surpasses that of the New Testament. Its superior success is rather owing to the fact that it is not, when applied, quite so spiritual and lofty, but rhymes better with the material and practical advances which touch the crude African mind, and which it is within his power to accept and illustrate.

JOEL BENTON.

VII.

THE TECHNICAL STRAIT-JACKET.

THE now familiar fact that invention is the legitimate offspring of necessity, was, no doubt, originally discovered by a very primeval person. He did not formulate the well-known proverb on the instant ; æons of profound research passed before that was effected ; but he recognized necessity, and straightway did what she required of him, thereby inaugurating the noble profession of engineering, which is only another name for ingenuity. Never in history has the engineering instinct developed so rapidly as within the present century, and nowhere has its advance been so marked and general as in America. The reason for this is not far to seek. To the narrow strip of sea-coast first occupied by Europeans there came only the adventurous, the energetic, the self-reliant of all the maritime nations ; sailors most of them, than whom there are no better practical engineers on earth.

The conditions of life were such as to stimulate all the inventive mechanical faculties in a very high degree, and especially was this the case where a sterile soil and a rigorous climate offered little in the way of gratuitous favors.

New England parents, whose brains were ever intent upon surmounting the obstacles and making good the deficiencies of their rough surroundings, naturally begat children even more fertile in expedients than their progenitors, and the records of the Patent Office show how intensely active has been the New England mind in this direction—so much so indeed that the phrase “Yankee Notions” has found a place in the dictionaries.

Such a school could hardly fail to be prolific of natural engineers, and while they may have made mistakes that a more elaborate technical training would have enabled them to avoid, their inventiveness, their fertility of resource, and their tireless energy were everywhere conspicuous.

But civilization sometimes dwarfs the individual. It savors of Philistinism to say it, but the influence of a too elaborate technical training upon many minds is to fix them unalterably in certain grooves.

For the plodders, who are usually in the majority, this may do well enough, and to their careful work we must look for the stability of our bridges and the trustworthiness of our dams and viaducts. There are gifted engineers, however, whose genius is only cramped by too much school tradition. It were easy to multiply instances where amateurs have set at naught the predictions of carefully trained engineers; but let the case of the late James B. Eads and the Mississippi jetties suffice. His failure was predicted with great unanimity by the United States corps of engineers, but the increased depth of water at the mouth of the great river is evidence of his superior insight.

Our purpose is by no means to throw discredit upon the schools. They doubtless raise the general average of efficiency, but they should studiously guard

against doing so at the expense of individual genius. An instructor ought to see after a year's observation of a student whether the treadmill of the regular curriculum is best in his case beyond a certain point. It is by no means easy to plan a course of instruction so that it shall meet the requirements of all cases. Technical schools call for rare endowments on the part of instructors, but it would seem that something more might be done than is done to avoid reducing the American engineer to the level of a well-constructed automaton, like too many European engineers of the present day. Such a state of things is the necessary result of centuries of development on fixed lines, and it must in due course come to us; but we have special climatic and topographical conditions here that call for special treatment, and we are not yet prepared to say precisely what line of instruction is, upon the whole, best for our peculiar requirements.

EDWARD COGSWELL.

VIII.

IMMORTALITY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

IN your last number Mr. Ingersoll's reply to Dr. Field contains the following upon the subject of immortality : "How is it that there is nothing in the Old Testament on this subject? How do you account for the fact that you do not find in the Old Testament, from the first mistake in Genesis to the last curse in Malachi, a funeral service? Is it not strange that some one in the Old Testament did not stand by an open grave of father or mother and say : 'We shall meet again?'"

Many are in the habit of flippantly asserting that the Old Testament does not teach the doctrine of eternal existence. But how, if that be so, can we interpret the yearnings and longings of people in those days for a "righteous death"? Many passages in these writings have no meaning except upon the basis of belief in immortality.

It is a matter of history that the question of a future life was the dividing line between Pharisees and Sadducees.

There are also direct statements :

"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."—Eccles. xii. 7.

"Thy dead men shall live ; together with my dead body shall they arise."—Isaiah xxvi. 19.

A wicked prophet besought that he might "die the death of the righteous." It was, no doubt, because he believed in what was expressed by Solomon :

"The wicked is driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death."

Of similar import is the language of Daniel (xii. 2): "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

The alleged absence of a funeral service is a mistake. The solemnities attending the burial of loved ones may not be rehearsed in detail, but they are abundantly implied, especially in such passages as Genesis 50th chap., and II. Samuel iii. 31, etc.

There is good reason to suppose that upon many such an occasion the certainty of meeting again was as clearly announced as it was by David in the 12th chapter of II. Samuel: "While the child was yet alive I fasted and wept, for I said, who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."